

I'm Known by How I've Grown, Part 4 - 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 – June 22nd, 2014

- Today's teaching will be part four of a series I've titled, "I'm Known by How I've Grown."
- I've really been looking forward to what the Lord has for us in the text that we have before us today and not for the reasons one might think.
- By that I mean, one wouldn't necessarily come away from this text as blunt as seems with the sense that it could actually change one's life.
- Allow me to explain by way of a question, have you ever felt like you were in a rut or that your life seemed to lack any purpose or meaning?
- If so, then I would suggest that the Apostle Paul can rise from the passage before us this morning and put his finger on the reasons why.
- More specifically, why our Christian lives can seemingly descend into the rut of the mundane, sentencing us to this purposeless existence.

- Perhaps more importantly, what it is that we can do about it if we find ourselves in this place, which is really the point of it and lesson in it.
- Before we jump into this I think it's very important we understand what the Apostle Paul is hoping to accomplish in this portion of his epistle.
- Namely, Paul by the Holy Spirit and by God's grace has to rebuke them for their carnality to get them back on the track to spiritual maturity.

- I suppose you could say that Paul has a vested interest in their spiritual maturity given that he's the one who planted the church in Corinth.
- Moreover, as the founder of the church, one would expect that Paul had most certainly earned the right to correct and redirect this church.
- The reason I point this out is that, absent this understanding, Paul's rebuke could be wrongly perceived as being disproportionately harsh.

1. I'm unable to eat the meat of solid doctrine (Verses 1-2)

- Here Paul addresses them as worldly not spiritual though brothers in Christ who are as infants that are still not ready for solid food but milk.

2. I'm riddled with jealousy and conflict (Verses 3-4)

- Paul says they're carnality is evidenced by jealousy and arguing about who follows Paul or Apollos, which is why they act like worldly men.

3. I'm growing worldly and bitter fruit (Verses 5-9)

- Paul uses the analogy of planting watering and growing to take himself and Apollos off their carnal pedestal hoping they bear spiritual fruit.

4. I'm building a fleshly foundation (Verses 10-15)

(10) By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. (11) For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. (12) If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, (13) his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. (14) If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. (15) If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.

- v10-11 Paul says by God's grace, he's laid a foundation that someone else builds on but no one can lay a foundation other than on Christ.
- v12-13 He says when the Day comes, it will reveal by fire whether the foundation was built with gold silver costly stones, wood hay or straw.
- v14-15 He says if what we've built survives we're rewarded however if it burns up we suffer loss though saved escaping through the flames.

- I think it would be best to sort through this packed passage by first identifying what Paul's main point is then work our way back from there.
- What Paul is saying here is we can still be saved, yet when we get to heaven, we're not going to have anything to show for it so-to-speak.
- This because, on that Day, how we lived our lives here on earth will be brought to light and as such revealed with fire, which will burn it up.

Charles Spurgeon - "Whatever work we do will be tested, by present opposition, by the lapse of time, by the advance of light, and especially by the judgment of the last great day. ...Being a good man he shall be saved, but having wasted his life in mistaken work he will lose the fruit of his pains; and having unwittingly caused injury to others, he will himself barely escape."

- Might I kindly ask if you'll indulge me for a moment as I quote in part from a Poem by C.T. Studd titled, "Only One Life, Twill Soon Be Past."
- "Two little lines I heard one day, Traveling along life's busy way; Bringing conviction to my heart, And from my mind would not depart;
- Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.
- Only one life, yes only one, Soon will its fleeting hours be done; Then, in 'that day' my Lord to meet, And stand before His Judgement seat;
- Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.
- Only one life, the still small voice, Gently pleads for a better choice Bidding me selfish aims to leave, And to God's holy will to cleave;
- Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.
- Give me Father, a purpose deep, In joy or sorrow Thy word to keep; Faithful and true what e'er the strife, Pleasing Thee in my daily life;
- Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.

- Here's the bottom line, if we're honest with ourselves, we'd admit that our meaningless and purposeless life is the result of our selfish life.
- Whereas conversely, a meaningful and purposeful life is the result of a selfless life. One lived for Christ, as opposed to one lived for self.
- Actually, this is the answer to the aforementioned question at the beginning of the introduction, such that, it explains why I'm in such a rut.

- I'll bring it to a close by taking it a step further and suggesting that we can never hope to be fulfilled living our Christian lives for ourselves.
- Furthermore, our lives can never have purpose and meaning if our spiritual service is done with carnal motives like Ananias and Sapphira.
- In other words, our lives won't be rewarding if "acts of righteousness" are done with the carnal motives of wanting to be seen as spiritual.

Matthew 6:1 NIV "Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven."

- Would to God we would be numbered amongst those who on that Day will have the quality of our work be as gold, silver, and costly stones.
- Would to God we would be numbered amongst those who in this day, prior to that Day, taste from the full cup of joy, purpose and meaning.